

# INEEL REPORTER

A closer look at science-based environmental management

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## INEEL Inserts Probe Tube Into Buried Waste Pit

*Crews at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory recently inserted a probe tube into a buried waste pit to collect information for an environmental investigation of all pits and trenches at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex.*

INEEL workers used a drill that emits sonic waves to sink a probe tube into Pit 9 on Dec. 1. A team from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland, Wash., travelled to the INEEL to check the soil moisture content in the tube before crews inserted additional tubes. About 20 probe tubes initially will be placed in the pit. Later, instruments will be inserted in the tubes to gather data, which will be used by the Department of Energy to better evaluate types and concentrations of waste.

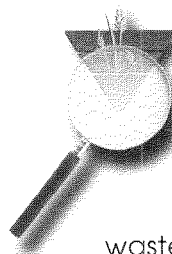


Next year, DOE will drill through the waste to bedrock and bring up core samples of waste to be used for treatability studies. The data will help DOE, EPA Region 10

and the state of Idaho make decisions on where and how to excavate waste from the pit.

Pit 9 is one acre of an 88-acre site used until 1970 to dispose of mixed transuranic waste from the Rocky Flats Plant in Colorado, the INEEL and other waste generators.

The Pit 9 project is being implemented in three stages. If the goals of each stage aren't met, the project could be curtailed and added to the scope of the ongoing environmental investigation that will examine all pits and trenches at the Subsurface Disposal Area.



Scientific data obtained from the Pit 9 remediation project will help DOE and its regulators determine how to address the buried waste at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex's Subsurface Disposal Area.



The INEEL Reporter is a bimonthly DOE newsletter for the public produced by the INEEL Environmental Management Program.

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## INEEL Opens Office in Jackson, Wyo.

*In an effort to provide more information to the Jackson community, DOE-ID is offering tours of the laboratory, meeting with community groups, and just opened an outreach office in Jackson.*

The INEEL office provides Jackson-area residents a convenient location to obtain information about current INEEL programs, projects and issues, and future missions of the laboratory. Information liaison Lori Cahn, a



The office opened for business Dec. 6 at 260 E. Simpson. It will be open Monday through Friday. The phone number is (307) 732-2990.

Jackson resident and INEEL employee, will help coordinate site visits by citizens, arrange INEEL Speakers Bureau presentations to local civic, government and special interest organizations and schools and provide timely responses to questions. The office is a repository for environmental reports and studies, detailed historical monitoring information, demographic statistics and other information about the INEEL. ▾

## The INEEL and Savannah River Sites Share Technology and Equipment

*The INEEL is transferring cuber technology to the Savannah River Site. The INEEL piloted the technology to recycle office waste into a usable energy source.*

The cuber technology, which has been developed and tested at the INEEL as a pilot project, will now take its next generation step into full production. The Savannah River Site will take the equipment and place it into full production at its plant in South Carolina.

The cuber – an agriculture technology that is used to convert hay into hay cubes – was procured in 1997 by the INEEL, from Cooper Equipment, Inc., in Burley, Idaho. Pollution Prevention received a grant from the DOE to purchase, install and test the machine to see if office waste could be converted into a usable energy source.

Over its life, the cuber processed 267,899 pounds of office waste generated at the INEEL. The cubes were used to supplement coal being fed into the Coal Fired Steam Generating Facility at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center. The facility is being shutdown; therefore, the INEEL planned to excess the equipment.

Rod Stewart, a principal waste specialist at the Savannah River Site, said the INEEL was instrumental in validating the technology to produce combustible material from raw material. The INEEL's equipment will allow the Savannah River Site to implement the cuber technology about a year sooner than previously forecast.

Through an interagency agreement, the Savannah River Site will use the machinery to process dead mail – mail that is undeliverable or has previously been disposed of by the U.S. Postal Service. Stewart said they expect to get 200 tons of dead mail each month. The Savannah River Site will use this paper to produce cubes to be fed into a coal-fired plant for steam-generated heat. ▾



## Briefly

▶ The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act permit for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant was issued by the New Mexico Environment Department. The permit became effective on Nov. 26, 1999. The Department of Energy has filed a lawsuit against the state of New Mexico challenging provisions in the permit requiring additional waste characterization at DOE sites and financial assurances for eventual closure of the WIPP facility. The requirements could cost the department more than \$30 million to implement. The potential impact to the INEEL's program is approximately \$9 million. The INEEL is currently reviewing the permit and will begin to make required changes to its procedures. The INEEL must be certified by the DOE-Carlsbad Area Office, the Environmental Protection Agency and the state of New Mexico Environment Department before initiation of future transuranic waste shipments.

▶ The Department of Energy's Idaho Operations Office has selected a team led by Foster Wheeler Environmental Corp. of New Jersey to design, construct and operate a dry spent nuclear fuel storage facility at the INEEL, pending Congressional approval. The dry fuel storage facility will allow DOE to remove spent nuclear fuel from underwater storage, and other fuel from aging, underground dry storage, thus removing a long-term safety and environmental concern. The facility will store fuel in canisters that can be used to transport and dispose of the fuel in a permanent repository when one becomes available.

▶ The State of Idaho Division of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have prepared a draft permit, which addresses the treatment of radioactive waste at the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility. Written public comment on the draft permit will be accepted through Feb. 7. Public hearings on the draft permit will be held (see calendar on back).

▶ The Bioremediation of Groundwater Speeds Cleanup at Test Area North fact sheet will be distributed to the INEEL's mailing list the week of Dec. 13. Please call 1 (800) 708-2680 to request a copy.

▶ The U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state of Idaho have signed a Record of Decision that details the planned cleanup of the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center at the DOE's INEEL. A major component of the Record of Decision is the construction of a repository - the INEEL CERCLA Disposal Facility - that will be used to consolidate radioactively contaminated soil and debris, from INTEC and other areas on INEEL. The repository will have a total capacity of 510,000 cubic yards and cover an area up to 54 acres.

## Get Involved

Citizens are encouraged to get involved in decision-making at the INEEL by reviewing and commenting on documents, attending public meetings, and requesting briefings or tours. Information about these public involvement activities can be obtained through:

### *Toll-Free Phone Number*

1-800-  
708-2680

To obtain specific documents or other information, request a speaker or briefing on a particular topic, inquire about public meetings or public comment periods, or schedule a tour of INEEL, call the INEEL toll-free number at 1 (800) 708-2680.

### *Internet*

environment.  
inel.gov

The INEEL Home Page is available at [www.inel.gov](http://www.inel.gov). Specific INEEL environmental information is available at [environment.inel.gov](http://environment.inel.gov). The INEEL Administrative Record is available at [ar.inel.gov/home.html](http://ar.inel.gov/home.html).



## Calendar

### *January*

- ▶ 5 Public meeting on the hazardous waste permit for the Radioactive Waste Management Complex, Idaho Falls Public Library, 6 to 8 p.m.
- ▶ 18 Public hearing in Boise on the draft permit for the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility, 7 to 9 p.m., DEQ Conference Room
- ▶ 19 Public hearing in Twin Falls on the draft permit for the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility, 7 to 9 p.m., Best Western-Cavanaugh's
- ▶ 20 Public hearing in Idaho Falls on the draft permit for the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility, 7 to 9 p.m., Shilo Inn Conference Hotel
- ▶ 25-26 Citizens Advisory Board meetings in Boise at the Owyhee Plaza, 1109 Main St., Tuesday from 8 to 6 p.m. and Wednesday from 8 to 5 p.m.
- ▶ INEEL High-Level Waste and Facilities Disposition Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be issued for public comment with public hearings to follow (specific locations and dates will be announced).



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